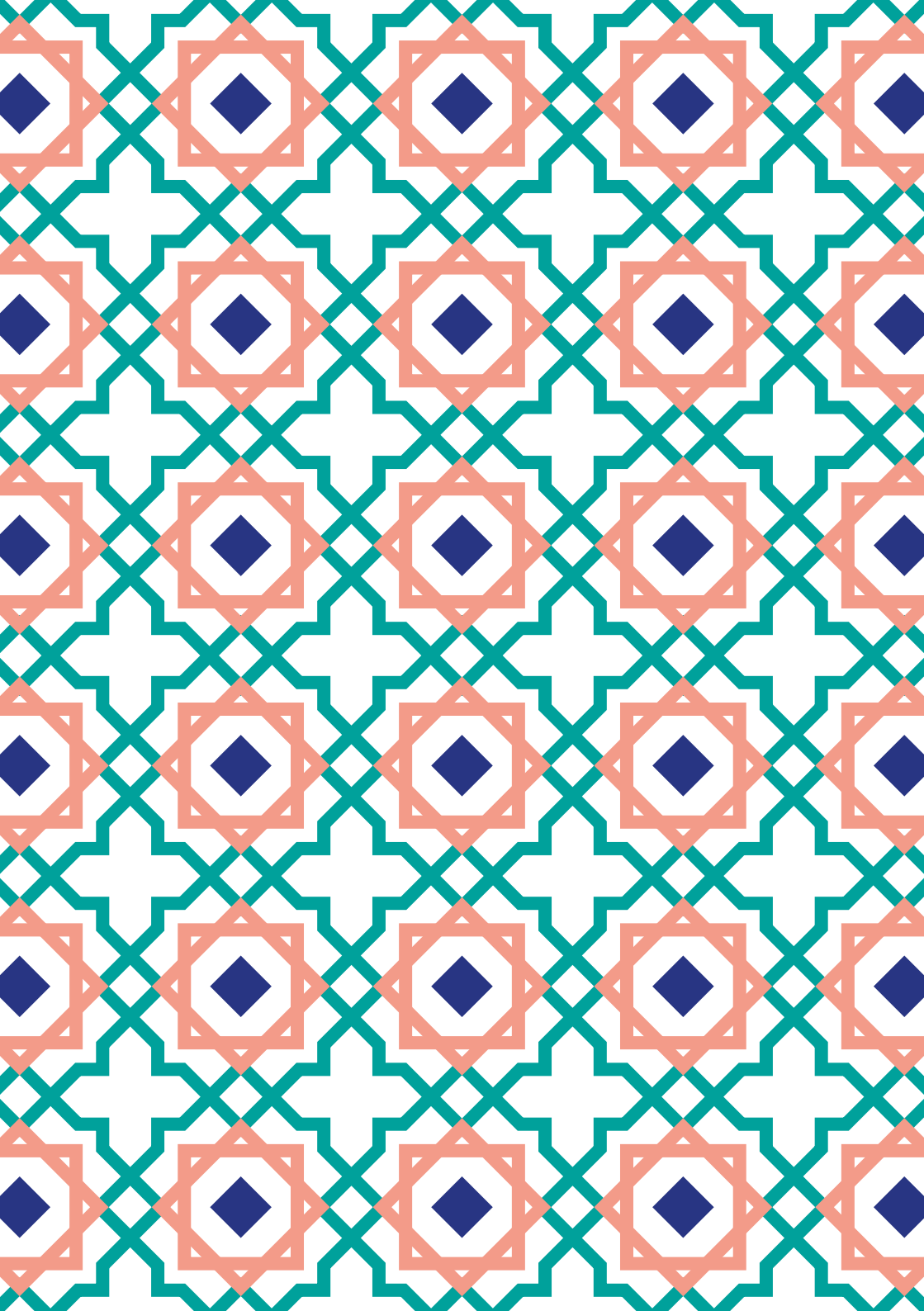
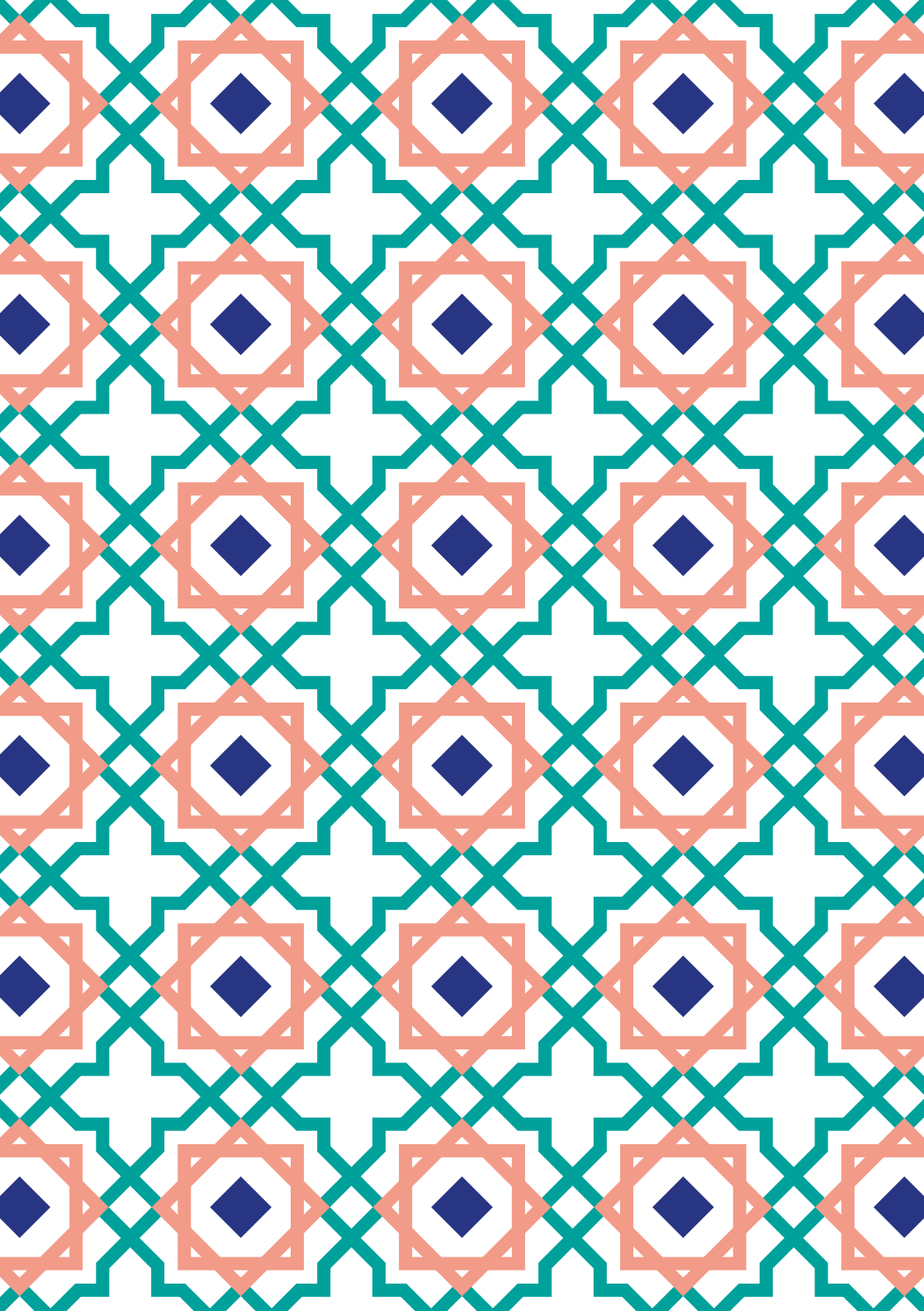
Metamorphoses
Book I

Ovid





METAMORPHOSEON
LIBER PRIMVS

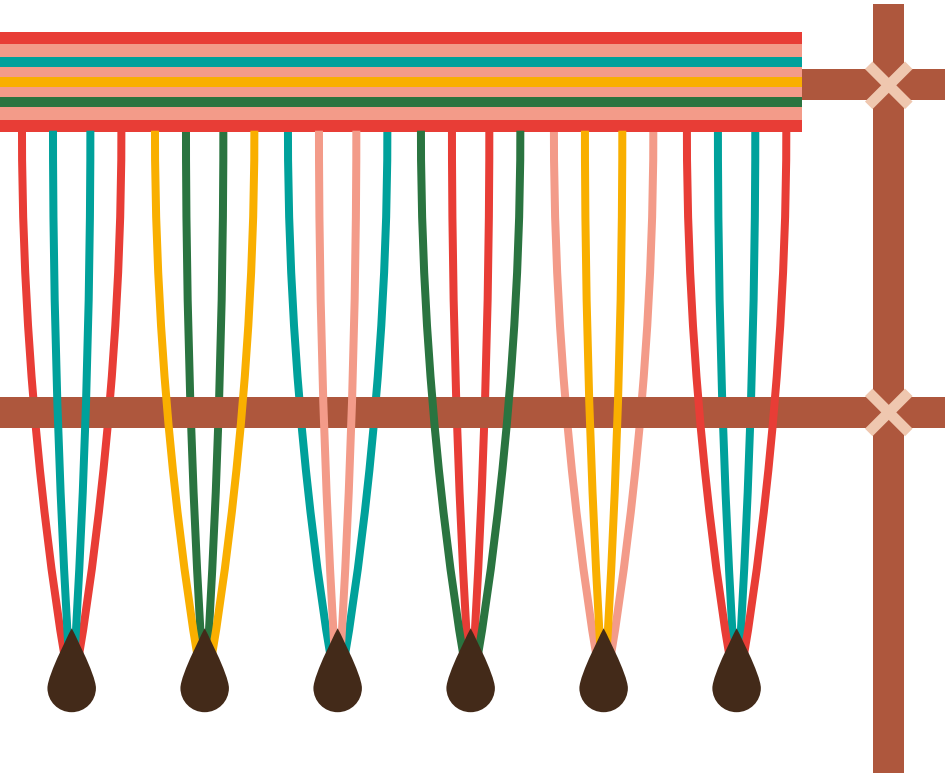
P. OVIDI NASONIS

Metamorphoses
Book I

by **Ovid**

translated by **Rolfe Humphries**

designed by **Dowon Jung**



	Preface	**1**
1-88	**The Creation**	**2**
89-162	**The Four Ages**	**10**
163-209	**Jove's Intervention**	**16**
210-261	**The Story of Lycaon**	**20**
262-312	**The Flood**	**26**
313-451	**Deucalion and Pyrrha**	**32**
452-587	**Apollo and Daphne**	**44**
588-	**Jove and Io**	**58**

In 2023, I attended a lecture by Alice Oswald, in which, when I wasn't distracted by watching a spider crawl up the back of the student sat in front of me, I remember hearing her talk about the rhapsodes — classical Greek performers of Homeric epics. *Rhapsode* originally meant 'one who sews songs,' as their art was to sew together repertoires of myths, poems, and tales into flowing epics. Simultaneously, as Oswald explained, the beauty of rhapsodies is that they sew people into collective experiences. It is to this tradition of rhapsodising that Ovid harks back in the very first lines of this work, as he proclaims his own 'perpetual song' (*perpetuum carmen*).

As I embark on this project, of returning to the beginning and illustrating the entirety of Ovid's Metamorphoses, I find myself thinking more and more about Oswald's rhapsodes. For the best conceived books ought to be rhapsodic in nature, in sewing immortal tales into incandescent pages (after all, most books before the advent of glue would have been themselves sewn and stitched together). Likewise, the best graphic design should sew together type and image and composition, seemingly effortlessly.

And so, I likewise hope to contribute to this perpetual fabric of culture. As a first step, please enjoy this copy of the first volume of Metamorphoses, which I sew from Ovid to you.

Dowon Jung, 2025

In nova fert animus mutatas dicere formas
corpora; di, coeptis (nam vos mutastis et illas)
adspirate meis primaque ab origine mundi
ad mea perpetuum deducite tempora carmen!

Ante mare et terras et quod tegit omnia caelum
unus erat toto naturae vultus in orbe,
quem dixere chaos: rudis indigestaque moles
nec quicquam nisi pondus iners congestaque eodem
non bene iunctarum discordia semina rerum.
nullus adhuc mundo praebebat lumina Titan,
nec nova crescendo reparabat cornua Phoebe,
nec circumfuso pendebat in aere tellus
ponderibus librata suis, nec bracchia longo
margine terrarum porrexerat Amphitrite;
utque erat et tellus illic et pontus et aer,
sic erat instabilis tellus, innabilis unda,
lucis egens aer; nulli sua forma manebat,
obstabatque aliis aliud, quia corpore in uno
frigida pugnabant calidis, umentia siccis,
mollia cum duris, sine pondere, habentia pondus.

Hanc deus et melior litem natura diremit.

My intention is to tell of bodies changed
To different forms; the gods, who made the changes,
Will help me – or I hope so – with a poem
That runs from the world's beginning to our own days.

Before the ocean was, or earth, or heaven,
Nature was all alike, a shapelessness,
Chaos, so-called, all rude and lumpy matter,
Nothing but bulk, inert, in whose confusion
Discordant atoms warred: there was no sun
To light the universe; there was no moon
With slender silver crescents filling slowly;
No earth hung balanced in surrounding air;
No sea reached far along the fringe of shore.
Land, to be sure, there was, and air, and ocean,
But land on which no man could stand, and water
No man could swim in, air no man could breathe,
Air without light, substance forever changing,
Forever at war: within a single body
Heat fought with cold, wet fought with dry, the hard
Fought with the soft, things having weight contended
With weightless things.
Till God, or kindlier Nature,

nam caelo terras et terris abscidit undas
et liquidum spisso secrevit ab aere caelum.
quae postquam evolvit caecoque exemit acervo,
dissociata locis concordi pace ligavit:
ignea convexi vis et sine pondere caeli
emicuit summaque locum sibi fecit in arce;
proximus est aer illi levitate locoque;
densior his tellus elementaque grandia traxit
et pressa est gravitate sua; circumfluus umor
ultima possedit solidumque coercuit orbem.

Sic ubi dispositam quisquis fuit ille deorum
congeriem secuit sectamque in membra coegit,
principio terram, ne non aequalis ab omni
parte foret, magni speciem glomeravit in orbis.
tum freta diffundi rapidisque tumescere ventis
iussit et ambitae circumdare litora terrae;
addidit et fontes et stagna inmensa lacusque
fluminaque obliquis cinxit declivia ripis,
quae, diversa locis, partim sorbentur ab ipsa,
in mare perveniunt partim campoque recepta
liberioris aquae pro ripis litora pulsant.
iussit et extendi campos, subsidere valles,

Settled all argument, and separated
Heaven from earth, water from land, our air
From the high stratosphere, a liberation
So things evolved, and out of blind confusion
Found each its place, bound in eternal order.
The force of fire, that weightless element,
Leaped up and claimed the highest place in heaven;
Below it, air; and under them the earth
Sank with its grosser portions; and the water,
Lowest of all, held up, held in, the land.

Whatever god it was, who out of chaos
Brought order to the universe, and gave it
Division, subdivision, he molded earth,
In the beginning, into a great globe,
Even on every side, and bade the waters
To spread and rise, under the rushing winds,
Surrounding earth; he added ponds and marshes,
He banked the river-channels, and the waters
Feed earth or run to sea, and that great flood
Washes on shores, not banks. He made the plains
Spread wide, the valleys settle, and the forest
Be dressed in leaves; he made the rocky mountains

fronde tegi silvas, lapidosos surgere montes,
utque duae dextra caelum totidemque sinistra
parte secant zonae, quinta est ardentior illis,
sic onus inclusum numero distinxit eodem
cura dei, totidemque plagae tellure premuntur.
quarum quae media est, non est habitabilis aestu;
nix tegit alta duas; totidem inter utramque locavit
temperiemque dedit mixta cum frigore flamma.
Inminet his aer, qui, quanto est pondere terrae
pondus aquae levius, tanto est onerosior igni.
illic et nebulas, illic consistere nubes
iussit et humanas motura tonitrua mentes
et cum fulminibus facientes fulgura ventos.

His quoque non passim mundi fabricator habendum
aera permisit; vix nunc obsistitur illis,
cum sua quisque regat diverso flamina tractu,
quin lanient mundum; tanta est discordia fratrum.
Eurus ad Auroram Nabataeaque regna recessit
Persidaque et radiis iuga subdita matutinis;
vesper et occiduo quae litora sole tepescunt,
proxima sunt Zephyro; Scythiam septemque triones
horrifer invasit Boreas; contraria tellus

Rise to full height, and as the vault of Heaven
Has two zones, left and right, and one between them
Hotter than these, the Lord of all Creation
Marked on the earth the same design and pattern.
The torrid zone too hot for men to live in,
The north and south too cold, but in the middle
Varying climate, temperature and season.
Above all things the air, lighter than earth,
Lighter than water, heavier than fire,
Towers and spreads; there mist and cloud assemble,
And fearful thunder and lightning and cold winds,

But these, by the Creator's order, held
No general dominion; even as it is,
These brothers brawl and quarrel; though each one
Has his own quarter, still, they come near tearing
The universe apart. Eurus is monarch
Of the lands of dawn, the realms of Araby,
The Persian ridges under the rays of morning.
Zephyrus holds the west that glows at sunset,
Boreas, who makes men shiver, holds the north,

nubibus adsiduis pluviaque madescit ab Austro.
haec super inposuit liquidum et gravitate carentem
aethera nec quicquam terrenae faecis habentem.

Vix ita limitibus dissaepserat omnia certis,
cum, quae pressa diu fuerant caligine caeca,
sidera coeperunt toto effervescere caelo;
neu regio foret ulla suis animalibus orba,
astra tenent caeleste solum formaeque deorum,
cesserunt nitidis habitandae piscibus undae,
terra feras cepit, volucres agitabilis aer.

Sanctius his animal mentisque capacius altae
deerat adhuc et quod dominari in cetera posset:
natus homo est, sive hunc divino semine fecit
ille opifex rerum, mundi melioris origo,
sive recens tellus seductaque nuper ab alto
aethere cognati retinebat semina caeli.
quam satus Iapeto, mixtam pluvialibus undis,
finxit in effigiem moderantum cuncta deorum,
pronaque cum spectent animalia cetera terram,
os homini sublime dedit caelumque videre
iussit et erectos ad sidera tollere vultus:

Warm Auster governs in the misty southland,
And over them all presides the weightless ether,
Pure without taint of earth.

These boundaries given,
Behold, the stars, long hidden under darkness,
Broke through and shone, all over the spangled heaven,
Their home forever, and the gods lived there,
And shining fish were given the waves for dwelling
And beasts the earth, and birds the moving air.

But something else was needed, a finer being.
More capable of mind, a sage, a ruler,
So Man was born, it may be, in God's image,
Or Earth, perhaps, so newly separated
From the old fire of Heaven, still retained
Some seed of the celestial force which fashioned
Gods out of living clay and running water.
All other animals look downward; Man,
Alone, erect, can raise his face toward Heaven.

sic, modo quae fuerat rudis et sine imagine, tellus
induit ignotas hominum conversa figuras.

urea prima sata est aetas, quae vindice nullo,
sponte sua, sine lege fidem rectumque colebat.
poena metusque aberant, nec verba minantia fixo
aere legebantur, nec supplex turba timebat
iudicis ora sui, sed erant sine vindice tuti.
nondum caesa suis, peregrinum ut viseret orbem,
montibus in liquidas pinus descenderat undas,
nullaque mortales praeter sua litora norant;
nondum praecipites cingebant oppida fossae;
non tuba derecti, non aeris cornua flexi,
non galeae, non ensis erat: sine militis usu
mollia securae peragebant otia gentes.
ipsa quoque inmunis rastroque intacta nec ullis
saucia vomeribus per se dabat omnia tellus,
contentique cibis nullo cogente creatis
arbuteos fetus montanaque fraga legebant
cornaque et in duris haerentia mora rubetis
et quae deciderant patula Iovis arbore glandes.
ver erat aeternum, placidique tepentibus auris
mulcebant zephyri natos sine semine flores;

The Four Ages

The Golden Age was first, a time that cherished
Of its own will, justice and right; no law.
No punishment, was called for; fearfulness
Was quite unknown, and the bronze tablets held
No legal threatening; no suppliant throng
Studied a judge's face; there were no judges,
There did not need to be. Trees had not yet
Been cut and hollowed, to visit other shores.
Men were content at home, and had no towns
With moats and walls around them; and no trumpets
Blared out alarums; things like swords and helmets
Had not been heard of. No one needed soldiers.
People were unaggressive, and unanxious;
The years went by in peace. And Earth, untroubled,
Unharried by hoe or plowshare, brought forth all
That men had need for, and those men were happy,
Gathering berries from the mountain sides,
Cherries, or blackcaps, and the edible acorns.
Spring was forever, with a west wind blowing
Softly across the flowers no man had planted,

mox etiam fruges tellus inarata ferebat,
nec renovatus ager gravidis canebat aristis;
flumina iam lactis, iam flumina nectaris ibant,
flavaque de viridi stillabant ilice mella.

Postquam Saturno tenebrosa in Tartara misso
sub Iove mundus erat, subiit argentea proles,
auro deterior, fulvo pretiosior aere.
Iuppiter antiqui contraxit tempora veris
perque hiemes aestusque et inaequalis autumnos
et breve ver spatiis exegit quattuor annum.
tum primum siccis aer fervoribus ustus
canduit, et ventis glacies adstricta pependit;
tum primum subiere domos; domus antra fuerunt
et densi frutices et vinctae cortice virgae.
semina tum primum longis Cerealia sulcis
obruta sunt, pressique iugo gemuere iuvenci.

Tertia post illam successit aenea proles,
saevior ingeniis et ad horrida promptior arma,
non scelerata tamen; de duro est ultima ferro.
protinus inrupit venae peioris in aevum
omne nefas: fugere pudor verumque fidesque;

And Earth, unplowed, brought forth rich grain; the field,
Unfallowed, whitened with wheat, and there were rivers
Of milk, and rivers of honey, and golden nectar
Dripped from the dark-green oak-trees.
After Saturn
Was driven to the shadowy land of death,
And the world was under Jove, the Age of Silver
Came in, lower than gold, better than bronze.
Jove made the springtime shorter, added winter,
Summer, and autumn, the seasons as we know them.
That was the first time when the burnt air glowed
White-hot, or icicles hung down in winter.
And men built houses for themselves; the caverns,
The woodland thickets, and the bark-bound shelters
No longer served; and the seeds of grain were planted
In the long furrows, and the oxen struggled
Groaning and laboring under the heavy yoke.

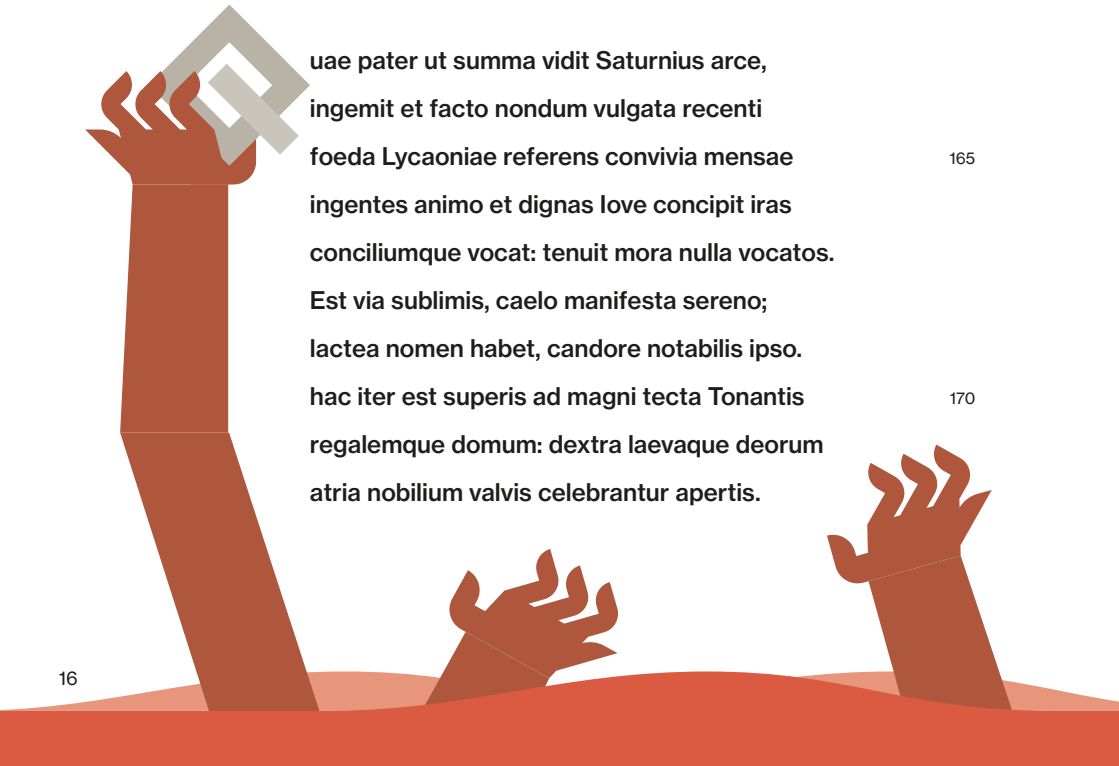
Then came the Age of Bronze, and dispositions
Took on aggressive instincts, quick to arm,
Yet not entirely evil. And last of all
The Iron Age succeeded, whose base vein
Let loose all evil: modesty and truth

in quorum subiere locum fraudesque dolusque
insidiaeque et vis et amor sceleratus habendi.
vela dabant ventis nec adhuc bene noverat illos
navita, quaeque prius steterant in montibus altis,
fluctibus ignotis insultavere carinae,
communemque prius ceu lumina solis et auras
cautus humum longo signavit limite mensor.
nec tantum segetes alimentaque debita dives
poscebatur humus, sed itum est in viscera terrae,
quasque recondiderat Stygiisque admoverat umbris,
effodiuntur opes, inritamenta malorum.
iamque nocens ferrum ferroque nocentius aurum
prodierat, prodit bellum, quod pugnat utroque,
sanguineaque manu crepitantia concutit arma.
vivitur ex rapto: non hospes ab hospite tutus,
non socer a genero, fratrum quoque gratia rara est;
inminet exitio vir coniugis, illa mariti,
lurida terribiles miscent aconita novercae,
filius ante diem patrios inquirit in annos:
victa iacet pietas, et virgo caede madentis
ultima caelestum terras Astraea reliquit.

And righteousness fled earth, and in their place
Came trickery and slyness, plotting, swindling,
Violence and the damned desire of having.
Men spread their sails to winds unknown to sailors,
The pines came down their mountain-sides, to revel
And leap in the deep waters, and the ground,
Free, once, to everyone, like air and sunshine,
Was stepped off by surveyors. The rich earth,
Good giver of all the bounty of the harvest,
Was asked for more; they dug into her vitals,
Pried out the wealth a kinder lord had hidden
In Stygian shadow, all that precious metal,
The root of evil. They found the guilt of iron,
And gold, more guilty still. And War came forth
That uses both to fight with; bloody hands
Brandished the clashing weapons. Men lived on plunder.
Guest was not safe from host, nor brother from brother,
A man would kill his wife, a wife her husband,
Stepmothers, dire and dreadful, stirred their brews
With poisonous aconite, and sons would hustle
Fathers to death, and Piety lay vanquished,
And the maiden Justice, last of all immortals,
Fled from the bloody earth.

Neve foret terris securior arduus aether,
adfectasse ferunt regnum caeleste gigantas
altaque congestos struxisse ad sidera montis.
tum pater omnipotens misso perfregit Olympum
fulmine et excussit subiecto Pelion Ossae.
obruta mole sua cum corpora dira iacerent,
perfusam multo natorum sanguine Terram
immaduisse ferunt calidumque animasse cruorem
et, ne nulla suae stirpis monimenta manerent,
in faciem vertisse hominum; sed et illa propago
contemptrix superum saevaeque avidissima caedis
et violenta fuit: scires e sanguine natos.

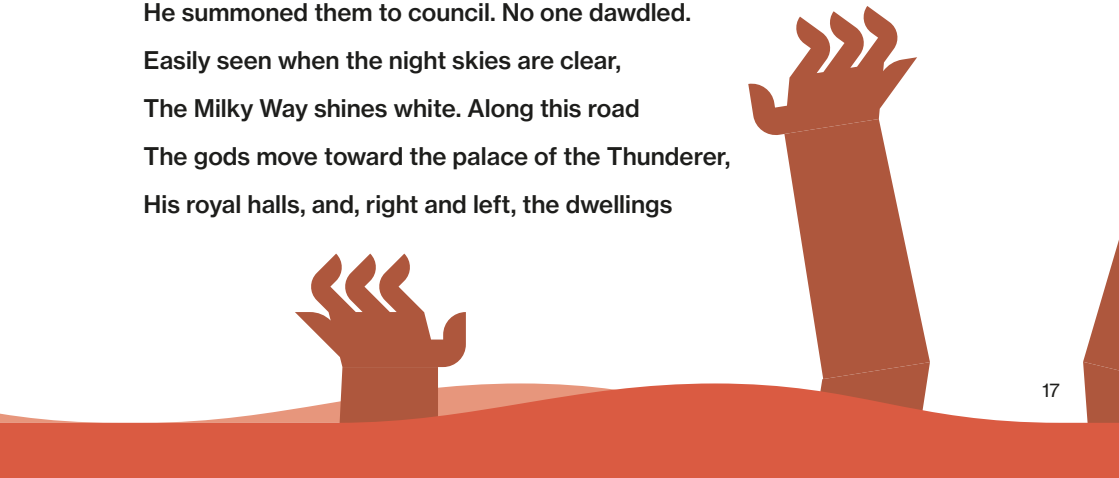
uae pater ut summa vidit Saturnius arce,
ingemit et facto nondum vulgata recenti
foeda Lycaoniae referens convivia mensae
ingentes animo et dignas Iove concipit iras
conciliumque vocat: tenuit mora nulla vocatos.
Est via sublimis, caelo manifesta sereno;
lactea nomen habet, candore notabilis ipso.
hac iter est superis ad magni tecta Tonantis
regalemque domum: dextra laevaque deorum
atria nobilium valvis celebrantur apertis.



Heaven was no safer.
Giants attacked the very throne of Heaven,
Piled Pelion on Ossa, mountain on mountain
Up to the very stars. Jove struck them down
With thunderbolts, and the bulk of those huge bodies
Lay on the earth, and bled, and Mother Earth,
Made pregnant by that blood, brought forth new bodies,
And gave them, to recall her older offspring,
The forms of men. And this new stock was also
Contemptuous of gods, and murder-hungry
And violent. You would know they were sons of blood.

Jove's Intervention

And Jove was witness from his lofty throne
Of all this evil, and groaned as he remembered
The wicked revels of Lycaon's table,
The latest guilt, a story still unknown
To the high gods. In awful indignation
He summoned them to council. No one dawdled.
Easily seen when the night skies are clear,
The Milky Way shines white. Along this road
The gods move toward the palace of the Thunderer,
His royal halls, and, right and left, the dwellings



plebs habitat diversa locis: hac parte potentes
caelicolae clarique suos posuere penates;
hic locus est, quem, si verbis audacia detur,
haud timeam magni dixisse Palatia caeli.

Ergo ubi marmoreo superi sedere recessu,
celsior ipse loco sceptroque innixus eburno
terrificam capitis concussit terque quaterque
caesariem, cum qua terram, mare, sidera movit.
talibus inde modis ora indignantia solvit:
'non ego pro mundi regno magis anxius illa
tempestate fui, qua centum quisque parabat
inicere anguipedum captivo bracchia caelo.
nam quamquam ferus hostis erat, tamen illud ab
corpore et ex una pendebat origine bellum;
nunc mihi qua totum Nereus circumsonat orbem,
perdendum est mortale genus: per flumina iuro
infera sub terras Stygio labentia luco!
cuncta prius temptanda, sed inmedicabile curae
ense recidendum, ne pars sincera trahatur.
sunt mihi semidei, sunt, rustica numina, nymphae

Of other gods are open, and guests come thronging.
The lesser gods live in a meaner section,
An area not reserved, as this one is,
For the illustrious Great Wheels of Heaven.
(Their Palatine Hill, if I might call it so.)

They took their places in the marble chamber
Where high above them all their king was seated,
Holding his ivory sceptre, shaking out
Thrice, and again, his awful locks, the sign
That made the earth and stars and ocean tremble,
And then he spoke, in outrage: “I was troubled
Less for the sovereignty of all the world
In that old time when the snake-footed giants
Laid each his hundred hands on captive Heaven.
Monstrous they were, and hostile, but their warfare
Sprung from one source, one body. Now, wherever
The sea-gods roar around the earth, a race
Must be destroyed, the race of men. I swear it!
I swear by all the Stygian rivers gliding
Under the world, I have tried all other measures.
The knife must cut the cancer out, infection
Averted while it can be, from our numbers.

faunique satyrique et monticolae silvani;
quos quoniam caeli nondum dignamur honore,
quas dedimus, certe terras habitare sinamus.
an satis, o superi, tutos fore creditis illos,
cum mihi, qui fulmen, qui vos habeoque regoque,
struxerit insidias notus feritate Lycaon?'

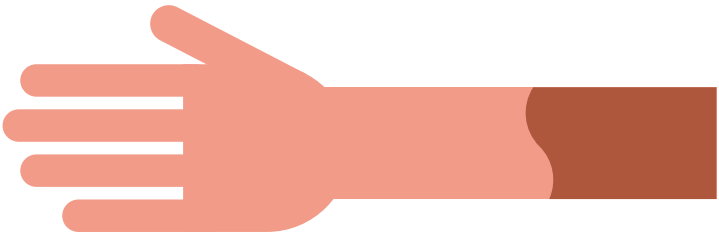
Confremuere omnes studiisque ardentibus ausum
talia deposcunt: sic, cum manus inpia saevit
sanguine Caesareo Romanum exstinguere nomen,
attonitum tantae subito terrore ruinae
humanum genus est totusque perhorruit orbis;
nec tibi grata minus pietas, Auguste, tuorum
quam fuit illa Iovi. qui postquam voce manuque
murmura conpressit, tenuere silentia cuncti.
substitit ut clamor pressus gravitate regentis,
Iuppiter hoc iterum sermone silentia rupit:

'Ille quidem poenas (curam hanc dimittite!) solvit;
quod tamen admissum, quae sit vindicta, docebo.
contigerat nostras infamia temporis aures;

Those demigods, those rustic presences,
Nymphs, fauns, and satyrs, wood and mountain dwellers.
We have not yet honoured with a place in Heaven,
But they should have some decent place to dwell in,
In peace and safety. Safety? Do you reckon
They will be safe, when I, who wield the thunder,
Who rule you all as subjects, am subjected
To the plottings of the barbarous Lycaon?"

They burned, they trembled. Who was this Lycaon,
Guilty of such rank infamy? They shuddered
In horror, with a fear of sudden ruin,
As the whole world did later, when assassins
Struck Julius Caesar down, and Prince Augustus
Found satisfaction in the great devotion
That cried for vengeance, even as Jove took pleasure,
Then, in the gods' response. By word and gesture
He calmed them down, awed them again to silence,
And spoke once more:
"He has indeed been punished.
On that score have no worry. But what he did,
And how he paid, are things that I must tell you.
I had heard the age was desperately wicked,

quam cupiens falsam summo delabor Olympo
et deus humana lustro sub imagine terras.
longa mora est, quantum noxae sit ubique repertum,
enumerare: minor fuit ipsa infamia vero.
Maenala transieram latebris horrenda ferarum
et cum Cyllene gelidi pineta Lycaei:
Arcadis hinc sedes et inhospita tecta tyranni
ingredior, traherent cum sera crepuscula noctem.
signa dedi venisse deum, vulgusque precari
coeperat: inridet primo pia vota Lycaon,
mox ait “experiar deus hic discrimine aperto
an sit mortalis: nec erit dubitabile verum.”
nocte gravem somno necopina perdere morte
comparat: haec illi placet experientia veri;
nec contentus eo, missi de gente Molossa
obsidis unius iugulum mucrone resolvit
atque ita semineces partim ferventibus artus
mollit aquis, partim subiecto torruit igni.
quod simul inposuit mensis, ego vindice flamma



I had heard, or so I hoped, a lie, a falsehood,
So I came down, as man, from high Olympus,
Wandered about the world. It would take too long
To tell you how widespread was all that evil.
All I had heard was grievous understatement!
I had crossed Maenala, a country bristling
With dens of animals, and crossed Cyllene,
And cold Lycaeus' pine woods. Then I came
At evening, with the shadows growing longer,
To an Arcadian palace, where the tyrant
Was anything but royal in his welcome.
I gave a sign that a god had come, and people
Began to worship, and Lycaon mocked them,
Laughed at their prayers, and said: 'Watch me find out
Whether this fellow is a god or mortal,
I can tell quickly, and no doubt about it.'
He planned, that night, to kill me while I slumbered;
That was his way to test the truth. Moreover,
And not content with that, he took a hostage,
One sent by the Molossians, cut his throat,
Boiled pieces of his flesh, still warm with life,
Broiled others, and set them before me on the table.
That was enough. I struck, and the bolt of lightning

in domino dignos everti tecta penates;
territus ipse fugit nactusque silentia ruris
exululat frustraque loqui conatur: ab ipso
colligit os rabiem solitaeque cupidine caedis
vertitur in pecudes et nunc quoque sanguine gaudet.
in villos abeunt vestes, in crura lacerti:
fit lupus et veteris servat vestigia formae;
canities eadem est, eadem violentia vultus,
idem oculi lucent, eadem feritatis imago est.
occidit una domus, sed non domus una perire
digna fuit: qua terra patet, fera regnat Erinys.
in facinus iurasse putes! dent ocius omnes,
quas meruere pati, (sic stat sententia) poenas.'

Dicta Iovis pars voce probant stimulosque frementi
adiciunt, alii partes adsensibus inplent.
est tamen humani generis iactura dolori
omnibus, et quae sit terrae mortalibus orbae
forma futura rogant, quis sit laturus in aras
tura, ferisne paret populandas tradere terras.
talia quaerentes (sibi enim fore cetera curae)
rex superum trepidare vetat subolemque priori
dissimilem populo promittit origine mira.

Blasted the household of that guilty monarch.
He fled in terror, reached the silent fields,
And howled, and tried to speak. No use at all!
Foam dripped from his mouth; bloodthirsty still, he turned
Against the sheep, delighting still in slaughter,
And his arms were legs, and his robes were shaggy hair,
Yet he is still Lycaon, the same grayness,
The same fierce face, the same red eyes, a picture
Of bestial savagery. One house has fallen,
But more than one deserves to. Fury reigns
Over all the fields of Earth. They are sworn to evil,
Believe it. Let them pay for it, and quickly!
So stands my purpose."

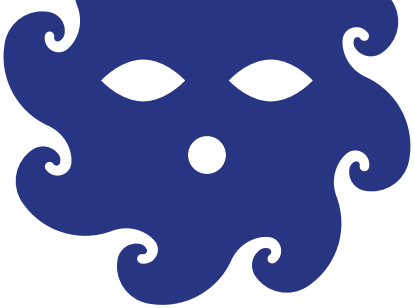
Part of them approved
With words and added fuel to his anger,
And part approved with silence, and yet all
Were grieving at the loss of humankind,
Were asking what the world would be, bereft
Of mortals: who would bring their altars incense?
Would earth be given the beasts, to spoil and ravage?
Jove told them not to worry; he would give them
Another race, unlike the first, created
Out of a miracle; he would see to it.

Iamque erat in totas sparsurus fulmina terras;
sed timuit, ne forte sacer tot ab ignibus aether
conciperet flammas longusque ardesceret axis:
esse quoque in fatis reminiscitur, adfore tempus,
quo mare, quo tellus correptaque regia caeli
ardeat et mundi moles obsessa laboret.
tela reponuntur manibus fabricata cyclopum;
poena placet diversa, genus mortale sub undis
perdere et ex omni nimbos demittere caelo.

Protinus Aeoliis Aquilonem claudit in antris
et quaecumque fugant inductas flamina nubes
emittitque Notum. madidis Notus evolat alis,
terribilem picea tectus caligine vultum;
barba gravis nimbis, canis fluit unda capillis;
fronte sedent nebulae, rorant pennaeque sinusque.
utque manu lata pendentia nubila pressit,
fit fragor: hinc densi funduntur ab aethere nimbi;
nuntia Iunonis varios induta colores
concipit Iris aquas alimentaque nubibus adfert.
sternuntur segetes et deplorata coloni
vota iacent, longique perit labor inritus anni.

He was about to hurl his thunderbolts
At the whole world, but halted, fearing Heaven
Would burn from fire so vast, and pole to pole
Break out in flame and smoke, and he remembered
The fates had said that some day land and ocean,
The vault of Heaven, the whole world's mighty fortress,
Besieged by fire, would perish. He put aside
The bolts made in Cyclopean workshops; better,
He thought, to drown the world by flooding water.

So, in the cave of Aeolus, he prisoned
The North-wind, and the West-wind, and such others
As ever banish cloud, and he turned loose
The South-wind, and the South-wind came out streaming
With dripping wings, and pitch-black darkness veiling
His terrible countenance. His beard is heavy
With rain-cloud, and his hoary locks a torrent,
Mists are his chaplet, and his wings and garments
Run with the rain. His broad hands squeeze together
Low-hanging clouds, and crash and rumble follow
Before the cloudburst, and the rainbow, Iris,
Draws water from the teeming earth, and feeds it
Into the clouds again. The crops are ruined,



Nec caelo contenta suo est Iovis ira, sed illum
caeruleus frater iuvat auxiliaribus undis.
convocat hic amnes: qui postquam tecta tyranni
intravere sui, ‘non est hortamine longo
nunc’ ait ‘utendum; vires effundite vestras:
sic opus est! aperite domos ac mole remota
fluminibus vestris totas inmittite habenas!’
iusserat; hi redeunt ac fontibus ora relaxant
et defrenato volvuntur in aequora cursu.
Ipse tridente suo terram percussit, at illa
intremuit motuque vias patefecit aquarum.
exspatiata ruunt per apertos flumina campos
cumque satis arbusta simul pecudesque virosque
tectaque cumque suis rapiunt penetralia sacris.
si qua domus mansit potuitque resistere tanto
indeiecta malo, culmen tamen altior huius
unda tegit, pressaeque latent sub gurgite turres.
iamque mare et tellus nullum discrimen habebant:
omnia pontus erant, derant quoque litora ponto.

Occupat hic collem, cumba sedet alter adunca

The farmers' prayers all wasted, all the labor
Of a long year, comes to nothing.
And Jove's anger,
Unbounded by his own domain, was given
Help by his dark-blue brother. Neptune called
His rivers all, and told them, very briefly,
To loose their violence, open their houses,
Pour over embankments, let the river horses
Run wild as ever they would. And they obeyed him.
His trident struck the shuddering earth; it opened
Way for the rush of waters. The leaping rivers
Flood over the great plains. Not only orchards
Are swept away, not only grain and cattle,
Not only men and houses, but altars, temples,
And shrines with holy fires. If any building
Stands firm, the waves keep rising over its roof-top,
Its towers are under water, and land and ocean
Are all alike, and everything is ocean,
An ocean with no shore-line.

Some poor fellow

et ducit remos illic, ubi nuper arabat:
ille supra segetes aut mersae culmina villae
navigat, hic summa piscem deprendit in ulmo.
figitur in viridi, si fors tulit, ancora prato,
aut subiecta terunt curvae vineta carinae;
et, modo qua graciles gramen carpsere capellae,
nunc ibi deformes ponunt sua corpora phocae.
mirantur sub aqua lucos urbesque domosque
Nereides, silvasque tenent delphines et altis
incursant ramis agitataque robora pulsant.
nat lupus inter oves, fulvos vehit unda leones,
unda vehit tigres; nec vires fulminis apro,
crura nec ablato prosunt velocia cervo,
quaesitisque diu terris, ubi sistere possit,
in mare lassatis volucris vaga decidit alis.
obruerat tumulos inmensa licentia ponti,
pulsabantque novi montana cacumina fluctus.
maxima pars unda rapitur; quibus unda pepercit,
illos longa domant inopi ieiunia victu.

Seizes a hill-top; another, in a dinghy,
Rows where he used to plough, and one goes sailing
Over his fields of grain or over the chimney
Of what was once his cottage. Someone catches
Fish in the top of an elm-tree, or an anchor
Drags in green meadow-land, or the curved keel brushes
Grape-arbors under water. Ugly sea-cows
Float where the slender she-goats used to nibble
The tender grass, and the Nereids come swimming
With curious wonder, looking, under water,
At houses, cities, parks, and groves. The dolphins
Invade the woods and brush against the oak-trees;
The wolf swims with the lamb; lion and tiger
Are borne along together; the wild boar
Finds all his strength is useless, and the deer
Cannot outspeed that torrent; wandering birds
Look long, in vain, for landing-place, and tumble,
Exhausted, into the sea. The deep's great license
Has buried all the hills, and new waves thunder
Against the mountain-tops. The flood has taken
All things, or nearly all, and those whom water,
By chance, has spared, starvation slowly conquers.

eparat Aonios Oetaeis Phocis ab arvis,
terra ferax, dum terra fuit, sed tempore in illo
pars maris et latus subitarum campus aquarum.
mons ibi verticibus petit arduus astra duobus,
nomine Parnasos, superantque cacumina nubes.
hic ubi Deucalion (nam cetera texerat aequor)
cum consorte tori parva rate vectus adhaesit,
Corycidas nymphas et numina montis adorant
fatidicamque Themin, quae tunc oracla tenebat:
non illo melior quisquam nec amantior aequi
vir fuit aut illa metuentior ulla deorum.
Iuppiter ut liquidis stagnare paludibus orbem
et superesse virum de tot modo milibus unum,
et superesse vidit de tot modo milibus unam,
innocuos ambo, cultores numinis ambo,
nubila disiecit nimbisque aquilone remotis
et caelo terras ostendit et aethera terris.
nec maris ira manet, positoque tricuspide telo
mulcet aquas rector pelagi supraque profundum
exstantem atque umeros innato murice tectum
caeruleum Tritona vocat conchaeque sonanti
inspirare iubet fluctusque et flumina signo
iam revocare dato: cava bucina sumitur illi,

Deucal-
ion and
Pyrrha

Phocis, a fertile land, while there was land,
Marked off Oetean from Boeotian fields.
It was ocean now, a plain of sudden waters.
There Mount Parnassus lifts its twin peaks skyward,
High, steep, cloud-piercing. And Deucalion came there
Rowing his wife. There was no other land,
The sea had drowned it all. And here they worshipped
First the Corycian nymphs and native powers,
Then Themis, oracle and fate-revealer.
There was no better man than this Deucalion,
No one more fond of right; there was no woman
More scrupulously reverent than Pyrrha.
So, when Jove saw the world was one great ocean,
Only one woman left of all those thousands,
And only one man left of all those thousands,
Both innocent and worshipful, he parted
The clouds, turned loose the North-wind, swept them off,
Showed earth to heaven again, and sky to land,
And the sea's anger dwindled, and King Neptune
Put down his trident, calmed the waves, and Triton,
Summoned from far down under, with his shoulders
Barnacle-strewn, loomed up above the waters,
The blue-green sea-god, whose resounding horn

tortilis in latum quae turbine crescit ab imo,
bucina, quae medio concepit ubi aera ponto,
litora voce replet sub utroque iacentia Phoebo;
tum quoque, ut ora dei madida rorantia barba
contigit et cecinit iussos inflata receptus,
omnibus audita est telluris et aequoris undis,
et quibus est undis audita, coercuit omnes.
iam mare litus habet, plenos capit alveus amnes,
flumina subsidunt collesque exire videntur;
surgit humus, crescunt sola decrescentibus undis,
postque diem longam nudata cacumina silvae
ostendunt limumque tenent in fronde relictum

Redditus orbis erat; quem postquam vidit inanem
et desolatas agere alta silentia terras,
Deucalion lacrimis ita Pyrrham adfatur obortis:
'o soror, o coniunx, o femina sola superstes,
quam commune mihi genus et patruelis origo,
deinde torus iunxit, nunc ipsa pericula iungunt,
terrarum, quascumque vident occasus et ortus,
nos duo turba sumus; possedit cetera pontus.
haec quoque adhuc vitae non est fiducia nostrae
certa satis; terrent etiamnum nubila mentem.

Is heard from shore to shore. Wet-bearded, Triton
Set lip to that great shell, as Neptune ordered,
Sounding retreat, and all the lands and waters
Heard and obeyed. The sea has shores; the rivers,
Still running high, have channels; the floods dwindle,
Hill-tops are seen again; the trees, long buried,
Rise with their leaves still muddy. The world returns.

Deucalion saw that world, all desolation,
All emptiness, all silence, and his tears
Rose as he spoke to Pyrrha: “O my wife,
The only woman, now, on all this earth,
My consort and my cousin and my partner
In these immediate dangers, look! Of all the lands
To East or West, we two, we two alone,
Are all the population. Ocean holds
Everything else; our foothold, our assurance,
Are small as they can be, the clouds still frightful.

quis tibi, si sine me fatis erepta fuisses,
nunc animus, miseranda, foret? quo sola timorem
ferre modo posses? quo consolante doleres!
namque ego (crede mihi), si te quoque pontus haberet,
te sequerer, coniunx, et me quoque pontus haberet.
o utinam possim populos reparare paternis
artibus atque animas formatae infundere terrae!
nunc genus in nobis restat mortale duobus.
sic visum superis: hominumque exempla manemus.'

dixerat, et flebant: placuit caeleste precari
numen et auxilium per sacras quaerere sortes.
nulla mora est: adeunt pariter Cephesidas undas,
ut nondum liquidas, sic iam vada nota secantes.
inde ubi libatos inroravere liquores
vestibus et capiti, flectunt vestigia sanctae
ad delubra deae, quorum fastigia turpi
pallebant musco stabantque sine ignibus arae.
ut templi tetigere gradus, procumbit uterque
pronus humi gelidoque pavens dedit oscula saxo
atque ita 'si precibus' dixerunt 'numina iustis
victa remollescunt, si flectitur ira deorum,
dic, Themi, qua generis damnum reparabile nostri

Poor woman – well, we are not all alone –
Suppose you had been, how would you bear your fear?
Who would console your grief? My wife, believe me,
Had the sea taken you, I would have followed.
If only I had the power, I would restore
The nations as my father did, bring clay
To life with breathing. As it is, we two
Are all the human race, so Heaven has willed it,
Samples of men, mere specimens."
They wept,
And prayed together, and having wept and prayed,
Resolved to make petition to the goddess
To seek her aid through oracles. Together
They went to the river-water, the stream Cephisus,
Still far from clear, but flowing down its channel,
And they took river-water, sprinkled foreheads,
Sprinkled their garments, and they turned their steps
To the temple of the goddess, where the altars
Stood with the fires gone dead, and ugly moss
Stained pediment and column. At the stairs
They both fell prone, kissed the chill stone in prayer:
"If the gods' anger ever listens
To righteous prayers, O Themis, we implore you,

arte sit, et mersis fer opem, mitissima, rebus!’

Mota dea est sortemque dedit: ‘discedite templo
et velate caput cinctasque resolvite vestes
ossaque post tergum magnae iactate parentis!’
obstupuere diu: rumpitque silentia voce
Pyrrha prior iussisque deae parere recusat,
detque sibi veniam pavido rogat ore pavetque
laedere iactatis maternas ossibus umbras.
interea repetunt caecis obscura latebris
verba datae sortis secum inter seque volutant.
inde Promethides placidis Epimethida dictis
mulcet et ‘aut fallax’ ait ‘est sollertia nobis,
aut (pia sunt nullumque nefas oracula suadent!)
magna parens terra est: lapides in corpore terrae
ossa reor dici; iacere hos post terga iubemur.’

Coniugis augurio quamquam Titania mota est,
spes tamen in dubio est: adeo caelestibus ambo

Tell us by what device our wreck and ruin
May be repaired. Bring aid, most gentle goddess,
To sunken circumstance."
And Themis heard them,
And gave this oracle: "Go from the temple,
Cover your heads, loosen your robes, and throw
Your mother's bones behind you!" Dumb, they stood
In blank amazement, a long silence, broken
By Pyrrha, finally: she would not do it!
With trembling lips she prays whatever pardon
Her disobedience might merit, but this outrage
She dare not risk, insult her mother's spirit
By throwing her bones around. In utter darkness
They voice the cryptic saying over and over,
What can it mean? They wonder. At last Deucalion
Finds the way out: "I might be wrong, but surely
The holy oracles would never counsel
A guilty act. The earth is our great mother,
And I suppose those bones the goddess mentions
Are the stones of earth; the order means to throw them,
The stones, behind us."
She was still uncertain,
And he by no means sure, and both distrustful

diffidunt monitis; sed quid temptare nocebit?
descendunt: velantque caput tunicasque recingunt
et iussos lapides sua post vestigia mittunt.
saxa (quis hoc credat, nisi sit pro teste vetustas?)
ponere duritiem coepere suumque rigorem
mollirique mora mollitaque ducere formam.
mox ubi creverunt naturaque mitior illis
contigit, ut quaedam, sic non manifesta videri
forma potest hominis, sed uti de marmore coepta
non exacta satis rudibusque simillima signis,
quae tamen ex illis aliquo pars umida suco
et terrena fuit, versa est in corporis usum;
quod solidum est flectique nequit, mutatur in ossa,
quae modo vena fuit, sub eodem nomine mansit,
inque brevi spatio superorum numine saxa
missa viri manibus faciem traxere virorum
et de femineo reparata est femina iactu.
inde genus durum sumus experiensque laborum
et documenta damus qua simus origine nati.

Cetera diversis tellus animalia formis
sponte sua peperit, postquam vetus umor ab igne
percaluit solis, caenumque udaeque paludes

Of that command from Heaven; but what damage,
What harm, would there be in trying? They descended,
Covered their heads, loosened their garments, threw
The stones behind them as the goddess ordered.
The stones – who would believe it, had we not
The unimpeachable witness of Tradition? –
Began to lose their hardness, to soften, slowly,
To take on form, to grow in size, a little,
Become less rough, to look like human beings,
Or anyway as much like human beings
As statues do, when the sculptor is only starting,
Images half blocked out. The earthy portion,
Damp with some moisture, turned to flesh, the solid
Was bone, the veins were as they always had been.
The stones the man had thrown turned into men,
The stones the woman threw turned into women,
Such being the will of God. Hence we derive
The hardness that we have, and our endurance
Gives proof of what we have come from.

Other forms
Of life came into being, generated
Out of the earth: the sun burnt off the dampness,
Heat made the slimy marshes swell; as seed

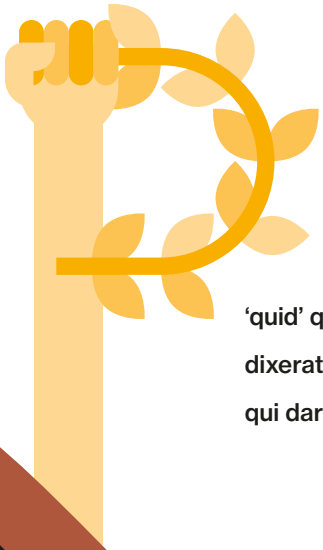
intumuere aestu, fecundaque semina rerum
vivaci nutrita solo ceu matris in alvo
creverunt faciemque aliquam cepere morando.
sic ubi deseruit madidos septemfluus agros
Nilus et antiquo sua flumina reddidit alveo
aetherioque recens exarsit sidere limus,
plurima cultores versis animalia glaebis
inveniunt et in his quaedam modo coepta per ipsum
nascendi spatium, quaedam inperfecta suisque
trunca vident numeris, et eodem in corpore saepe
altera pars vivit, rudis est pars altera tellus.
quippe ubi temperiem sumpsere umorque calorque,
concipiunt, et ab his oriuntur cuncta duobus,
cumque sit ignis aquae pugnax, vapor umidus omnes
res creat, et discors concordia fetibus apta est.
ergo ubi diluvio tellus lutulenta recenti
solibus aetheriis altoque recanduit aestu,
edidit innumeras species; partimque figuras
rettulit antiquas, partim nova monstra creavit.

Illa quidem nollet, sed te quoque, maxime Python,
tum genuit, populisque novis, incognita serpens,
terror eras: tantum spatii de monte tenebas.

Swells in a mother's womb to shape and substance,
So new forms came to life. When the Nile river
Floods and recedes and the mud is warmed by sunshine,
Men, turning over the earth, find living things,
And some not living, but nearly so, imperfect,
On the verge of life, and often the same substance
Is part alive, part only clay. When moisture
Unites with heat, life is conceived; all things
Come from this union. Fire may fight with water,
But heat and moisture generate all things,
Their discord being productive. So when earth,
After that flood, still muddy, took the heat,
Felt the warm fire of sunlight, she conceived,
Brought forth, after their fashion, all the creatures,
Some old, some strange and monstrous.

One, for instance,
She bore unwanted, a gigantic serpent,
Python by name, whom the new people dreaded,
A huge bulk on the mountain-side. Apollo,

hunc deus arcitenens, numquam letalibus armis
ante nisi in dammis capreisque fugacibus usus,
mille gravem telis exhausta paene pharetra
perdidit effuso per vulnera nigra veneno.
neve operis famam posset delere vetustas,
instituit sacros celebri certamine ludos,
Pythia de domitae serpentis nomine dictos.
hic iuvenum quicumque manu pedibusve rotave
vicerat, aesculeae capiebat frondis honorem.
nondum laurus erat, longoque decentia crine
tempora cingebat de qualibet arbore Phoebus.



rimus amor Phoebi Daphne Peneia, quem non
fors ignara dedit, sed saeva Cupidinis ira,
Delius hunc nuper, victa serpente superbus,
viderat adducto flectentem cornua nervo
'quid' que 'tibi, lascive puer, cum fortibus armis?'
dixerat: 'ista decent umeros gestamina nostros,
qui dare certa ferae, dare vulnera possumus hosti,

God of the glittering bow, took a long time
To bring him down, with arrow after arrow
He had never used before except in hunting
Deer and the skipping goats. Out of the quiver
Sped arrows by the thousand, till the monster,
Dying, poured poisonous blood on those black wounds.
In memory of this, the sacred games,
Called Pythian, were established, and Apollo
Ordained for all young winners in the races,
On foot or chariot, for victorious fighters,
The crown of oak. That was before the laurel,
That was before Apollo wreathed his forehead
With garlands from that tree, or any other.

Apollo and Daphne

Now the first girl Apollo loved was Daphne,
Whose father was the river-god Peneus,
And this was no blind chance, but Cupid's malice.
Apollo, with pride and glory still upon him
Over the Python slain, saw Cupid bending
His tight-strung little bow. "O silly youngster,"
He said, "What are you doing with such weapons?
Those are for grown-ups! The bow is for my shoulders;
I never fail in wounding beast or mortal,

qui modo pestifero tot iugera ventre prementem
stravimus innumeris tumidum Pythona sagittis.
tu face nescio quos esto contentus amores
inritare tua, nec laudes adsere nostras!'
filius huic Veneris 'figat tuus omnia, Phoebe,
te meus arcus' ait; 'quantoque animalia cedunt
cuncta deo, tanto minor est tua gloria nostra.'
dixit et eliso percussis aere pennis
inpiger umbrosa Parnasi constitit arce
eque sagittifera prompsit duo tela pharetra
diversorum operum: fugat hoc, facit illud amorem;
quod facit, auratum est et cuspide fulget acuta,
quod fugat, obtusum est et habet sub harundine plumbum.
hoc deus in nympha Peneide fixit, at illo
laesit Apollineas traiecta per ossa medullas;
protinus alter amat, fugit altera nomen amantis
silvarum latebris captivarumque ferarum
exuviis gaudens innuptaeque aemula Phoebes:
vitta coercebat positos sine lege capillos.
multi illam petiere, illa aversata petentes

And not so long ago I slew the Python
With countless darts; his bloated body covered
Acre on endless acre, and I slew him!
The torch, my boy, is enough for you to play with,
To get the love-fires burning. Do not meddle
With honours that are mine!" And Cupid answered:
"Your bow shoots everything, Apollo – maybe –
But mine will fix you! You are far above
All creatures living, and by just that distance
Your glory less than mine." He shook his wings,
Soared high, came down to the shadows of Parnassus,
Drew from his quiver different kinds of arrows,
One causing love, golden and sharp and gleaming,
The other blunt, and tipped with lead, and serving
To drive all love away, and this blunt arrow
He used on Daphne, but he fired the other,
The sharp and golden shaft, piercing Apollo
Through bones, through marrow, and at once he loved
And she at once fled from the name of lover,
Rejoicing in the woodland hiding places
And spoils of beasts which she had taken captive,
A rival of Diana, virgin goddess.
She had many suitors, but she scorned them all;

inpatiens expersque viri nemora avia lustrat
nec, quid Hymen, quid Amor, quid sint conubia curat.
saepe pater dixit: ‘generum mihi, filia, debes,’
saepe pater dixit: ‘debes mihi, nata, nepotes’;
illa velut crimen taedas exosa iugales
pulchra verecundo suffuderat ora rubore
inque patris blandis haerens cervice lacertis
‘da mihi perpetua, genitor carissime,’ dixit
‘virginitate frui! dedit hoc pater ante Dianae.’
ille quidem obsequitur, sed te decor iste quod optas
esse vetat, votoque tuo tua forma repugnat:
Phoebus amat visaeque cupit conubia Daphnes,
quodque cupit, sperat, suaque illum oracula fallunt,
utque leves stipulae demptis adolentur aristis,
ut facibus saepes ardent, quas forte viator
vel nimis admovit vel iam sub luce reliquit,
sic deus in flammas abiit, sic pectore toto
uritur et sterilem sperando nutrit amorem.
spectat inornatos collo pendere capillos
et ‘quid, si comantur?’ ait. videt igne micantes
sideribus similes oculos, videt oscula, quae non
est vidisse satis; laudat digitosque manusque

Wanting no part of any man, she travelled
The pathless groves, and had no care whatever
For husband, love, or marriage. Her father often
Said, “Daughter, give me a son-in-law!” and “Daughter,
Give me some grandsons!” But the marriage torches
Were something hateful, criminal, to Daphne,
So she would blush, and put her arms around him,
And coax him: “Let me be a virgin always;
Diana’s father said she might. Dear father!
Dear father — please!” He yielded, but her beauty
Kept arguing against her prayer. Apollo
Loves at first sight; he wants to marry Daphne,
He hopes for what he wants — all wishful thinking! —
Is fooled by his own oracles. As stubble
Burns when the grain is harvested, as hedges
Catch fire from torches that a passer-by
Has brought too near, or left behind in the morning,
So the god burned, with all his heart, and burning
Nourished that futile love of his by hoping.
He sees the long hair hanging down her neck
Uncared for, says, “But what if it were combed?”
He gazes at her eyes — they shine like stars!
He gazes at her lips, and knows that gazing

bracchiaque et nudos media plus parte lacertos;
si qua latent, meliora putat. fugit ocior aura
illa levi neque ad haec revocantis verba resistit:
‘nympha, precor, Penei, mane! non insequor hostis;
nympha, mane! sic agna lupum, sic cerva leonem,
sic aquilam penna fugiunt trepidante columbae,
hostes quaeque suos: amor est mihi causa sequendi!
me miserum! ne prona cadas indignave laedi
crura notent sentes et sim tibi causa doloris!
aspera, qua properas, loca sunt: moderatius, oro,
curre fugamque inhibe, moderatius insequar ipse.
cui placeas, inquire tamen: non incola montis,
non ego sum pastor, non hic armenta gregesque
horridus observo. nescis, temeraria, nescis,

Is not enough. He marvels at her fingers,
Her hands, her wrists, her arms, bare to the shoulder,
And what he does not see he thinks is better.
But still she flees him, swifter than the wind,
And when he calls she does not even listen:
“Don’t run away, dear nymph! Daughter of Peneus,
Don’t run away! I am no enemy,
Only your follower: don’t run away!
The lamb flees from the wolf, the deer the lion,
The dove, on trembling wing, flees from the eagle.
All creatures flee their foes. But I, who follow,
Am not a foe at all. Love makes me follow,
Unhappy fellow that I am, and fearful
You may fall down, perhaps, or have the briars
Make scratches on those lovely legs, unworthy
To be hurt so, and I would be the reason.
The ground is rough here. Run a little slower,
And I will run, I promise, a little slower.
Or wait a minute: be a little curious
Just who it is you charm. I am no shepherd,
No mountain-dweller, I am not a ploughboy,
Uncouth and stinking of cattle. You foolish girl,
You don’t know who it is you run away from,

quem fugias, ideoque fugis: mihi Delphica tellus
et Claros et Tenedos Patareaque regia servit;
Iuppiter est genitor; per me, quod eritque fuitque
estque, patet; per me concordant carmina nervis.
certa quidem nostra est, nostra tamen una sagitta
certior, in vacuo quae vulnera pectore fecit!
inventum medicina meum est, opiferque per orbem
dicor, et herbarum subiecta potentia nobis.
ei mihi, quod nullis amor est sanabilis herbis
nec prosunt domino, quae prosunt omnibus, artes!'

Plura locuturum timido Peneia cursu
fugit cumque ipso verba inperfecta reliquit,
tum quoque visa decens; nudabant corpora venti,
obviaque adversas vibrabant flamina vestes,
et levis inpulsos retro dabat aura capillos,
auctaque forma fuga est. sed enim non sustinet ultra
perdere blanditias iuvenis deus, utque monebat
ipse Amor, admisso sequitur vestigia passu.
ut canis in vacuo leporem cum Gallicus arvo
vidit, et hic praedam pedibus petit, ille salutem;
alter inhaesuro similis iam iamque tenere

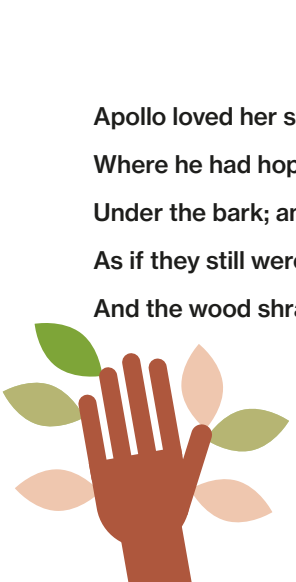
That must be why you run. I am lord of Delphi
And Tenedos and Claros and Patara.
Jove is my father. I am the revealer
Of present, past and future; through my power
The lyre and song make harmony; my arrow
Is sure in aim – there is only one arrow surer,
The one that wounds my heart. The power of healing
Is my discovery; I am called the Healer
Through all the world: all herbs are subject to me.
Alas for me, love is incurable
With any herb; the arts which cure the others
Do me, their lord, no good!"
He would have said
Much more than this, but Daphne, frightened, left him
With many words unsaid, and she was lovely
Even in flight, her limbs bare in the wind,
Her garments fluttering, and her soft hair streaming,
More beautiful than ever. But Apollo,
Too young a god to waste his time in coaxing,
Came following fast. When a hound starts a rabbit
In an open field, one runs for game, one safety,
He has her, or thinks he has, and she is doubtful
Whether she's caught or not, so close the margin,

sperat et extento stringit vestigia rostro,
alter in ambiguo est, an sit conprensus, et ipsis
morsibus eripitur tangentiaque ora relinquit:
sic deus et virgo est hic spe celer, illa timore.
qui tamen insequitur pennis adiutus Amoris,
ocior est requiemque negat tergoque fugacis
inminet et crinem sparsum cervicibus adflat.
viribus absumptis expalluit illa citaeque
victa labore fugae spectans Peneidas undas
'fer, pater,' inquit 'opem! si flumina numen habetis,
qua nimium placui, mutando perde figuram!'
[quae facit ut laedar mutando perde figuram.]
vix prece finita torpor gravis occupat artus,
mollia cinguntur tenui praecordia libro,
in frondem crines, in ramos bracchia crescunt,
pes modo tam velox pigris radicibus haeret,
ora cacumen habet: remanet nitor unus in illa.

Hanc quoque Phoebus amat positaque in stipite dextra
sentit adhuc trepidare novo sub cortice pectus
conplexusque suis ramos ut membra lacertis
oscula dat ligno; refugit tamen oscula lignum.

So ran the god and girl, one swift in hope,
The other in terror, but he ran more swiftly,
Borne on the wings of love, gave her no rest,
Shadowed her shoulder, breathed on her streaming hair.
Her strength was gone, worn out by the long effort
Of the long flight; she was deathly pale, and seeing
The river of her father, cried “O help me,
If there is any power in the rivers,
Change and destroy the body which has given
Too much delight!” And hardly had she finished,
When her limbs grew numb and heavy, her soft breasts
Were closed with delicate bark, her hair was leaves,
Her arms were branches, and her speedy feet
Rooted and held, and her head became a tree top,
Everything gone except her grace, her shining.

Apollo loved her still. He placed his hand
Where he had hoped and felt the heart still beating
Under the bark; and he embraced the branches
As if they still were limbs, and kissed the wood,
And the wood shrank from his kisses, and the god



cui deus ‘at, quoniam coniunx mea non potes esse,
arbor eris certe’ dixit ‘mea! semper habebunt
te coma, te citharae, te nostrae, laure, pharetrae;
tu ducibus Latiis aderis, cum laeta Triumphum
vox canet et visent longas Capitolia pompas;
postibus Augustis eadem fidissima custos
ante fores stabis mediamque tuebere quercum,
utque meum intonsis caput est iuvenale capillis,
tu quoque perpetuos semper gere frondis honores!’
finierat Paean: factis modo laurea ramis
adnuit utque caput visa est agitasse cacumen.

Est nemus Haemoniae, praerupta quod undique claudit
silva: vocant Tempe; per quae Peneos ab imo
effusus Pindo spumosis volvitur undis
deiectuque gravi tenues agitantia fumos
nubila conducit summisque adspergine silvis
inpluit et sonitu plus quam vicina fatigat:
haec domus, haec sedes, haec sunt penetralia magni
amnis, in his residens facto de cautibus antro,
undis iura dabat nymphisque colentibus undas.
conveniunt illuc popularia flumina primum,
nescia, gratentur consolenturne parentem,

Exclaimed: “Since you can never be my bride,
My tree at least you shall be! Let the laurel
Adorn, henceforth, my hair, my lyre, my quiver:
Let Roman victors, in the long procession,
Wear laurel wreaths for triumph and ovation.
Beside Augustus’ portals let the laurel
Guard and watch over the oak, and as my head
Is always youthful, let the laurel always
Be green and shining!” He said no more. The laurel,
Stirring, seemed to consent, to be saying *Yes*.

There is a grove in Thessaly, surrounded
By woodlands with steep slopes; men call it Tempe.
Through this the Peneus River’s foamy waters
Rise below Pindus mountain. The cascades
Drive a fine smoky mist along the tree tops,
Frail clouds, or so it seems, and the roar of the water
Carries beyond the neighborhood. Here dwells
The mighty god himself, his holy of holies
Is under a hanging rock; it is here he gives
Laws to the nymphs, laws to the very water.
And here came first the streams of his own country

populifer Sperchios et inrequietus Enipeus
Apidanosque senex lenisque Amphrysos et Aeas,
moxque amnes alii, qui, qua tulit inpetus illos,
in mare deducunt fessas erroribus undas.
Inachus unus abest imoque reconditus antro
fletibus auget aquas natamque miserrimus Io
luget ut amissam: nescit, vitane fruatur
an sit apud manes; sed quam non invenit usquam,
esse putat nusquam atque animo peiora veretur.

Viderat a patrio redeuntem Iuppiter illam
flumine et ‘o virgo Iove digna tuoque beatum
nescio quem factura toro, pete’ dixerat ‘umbras
altorum nemorum’ (et nemorum monstraverat umbras)
‘dum calet, et medio sol est altissimus orbe!
quodsi sola times latebras intrare ferarum,
praeside tuta deo nemorum secreta subibis,
nec de plebe deo, sed qui caelestia magna

Not knowing what to offer, consolation
Or something like rejoicing: crowned with poplars
Sperchios came, and restless Enipeus,
Old Apidanus, Aeas, and Amphrysos
The easy-going. And all the other rivers
That take their weary waters into oceans
All over the world, came there, and only one
Was absent, Inachus, hiding in his cavern,
Salting his stream with tears, oh, most unhappy,
Mourning a daughter lost. Her name was Io,
Who might, for all he knew, be dead or living,
But since he can not find her anywhere
He thinks she must be nowhere, and his sorrow
Fears for the worst.

Jove had seen Io coming

Jove
and Io

From the river of her father, and had spoken:
"O maiden, worthy of the love of Jove,
And sure to make some lover happy in bed,
Come to the shade of these deep woods" (he showed
them)
"Come to the shade, the sun is hot and burning,
No beasts will hurt you there, I will go with you,
If a god is at your side, you will walk safely

sceptra manu teneo, sed qui vaga fulmina mitto.
ne fuge me!' fugiebat enim. iam pascua Lernae
consitaque arboribus Lyrcea reliquerat arva,
cum deus inducta latas caligine terras
occuluit tenuitque fugam rapuitque pudorem.

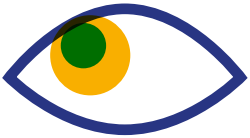
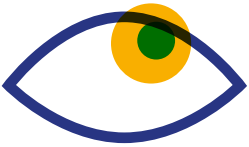
Interea medios Iuno despexit in Argos
et noctis faciem nebulas fecisse volucres
sub nitido mirata die, non fluminis illas
esse, nec umenti sensit tellure remitti;
atque suus coniunx ubi sit circumspicit, ut quae
deprensi totiens iam nosset furta mariti.
quem postquam caelo non repperit, 'aut ego fallor
aut ego laedor' ait delapsaque ab aethere summo
constitit in terris nebulasque recedere iussit.
coniugis adventum praesenserat inque nitentem
Inachidos vultus mutaverat ille iuvencam;
bos quoque formosa est. speciem Saturnia vaccae,
quamquam invita, probat nec non, et cuius et unde
quove sit armento, veri quasi nescia quaerit.

In the very deepest woods. I am a god,
And no plebeian godling, either, but the holder
Of Heaven's sceptre, hurler of the thunder.
Oh, do not flee me!" She had fled already
Leaving Lyrcea's plains, and Lema's meadows,
When the god hid the lands in murk and darkness
And stayed her flight, and took her.

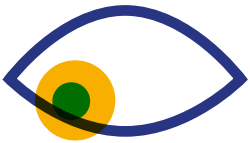
Meanwhile Juno
Looked down on Argos: what could those clouds be doing
In the bright light of day? They were not mists
Rising from rivers or damp ground. She wondered,
Took a quick look around to see her husband,
Or see where he might be – she knew his cheating!
So when she did not find him in the heaven,
She said, "I am either wrong, or being wronged,"
Came gliding down from Heaven, stood on earth,
Broke up the clouds. But Jove, ahead of time,
Could tell that she was coming; he changed Io
Into a heifer, white and shining, lovely
Even in altered form, and even Juno
Looked on, though hating to, with admiration,
And asked whom she belonged to, from what pasture,
As if she did not know! And Jove, the liar,

Iuppiter e terra genitam mentitur, ut auctor
desinat inquiri: petit hanc Saturnia munus.
quid faciat? crudele suos addicere amores,
non dare suspectum est: Pudor est, qui suadeat illinc,
hinc dissuadet Amor. victus Pudor esset Amore,
sed leve si munus sociae generisque torique
vacca negaretur, poterat non vacca videri!

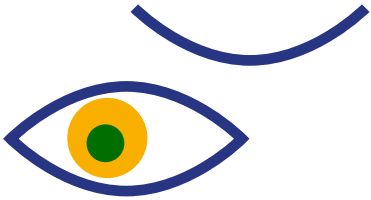
Paelice donata non protinus exuit omnem
diva metum timuitque Iovem et fuit anxia furti,
donec Arestoridae servandam tradidit Argo.
centum luminibus cinctum caput Argus habebat
inde suis vicibus capiebant bina quietem,
cetera servabant atque in statione manebant.
constiterat quocumque modo, spectabat ad Io,
ante oculos Io, quamvis aversus, habebat.
luce sinit pasci; cum sol tellure sub alta est,
claudit et indigno circumdat vincula collo.
frondibus arboreis et amara pascitur herba.
proque toro terrae non semper gramen habenti
incubat infelix limosaque flumina potat.

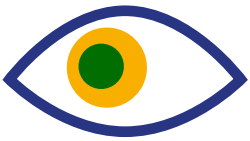



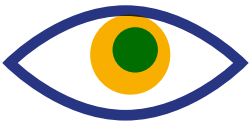
To put a stop to questions, said she had sprung
Out of the earth, full-grown. Then Juno asked him,
Could I have her, as a present?" What could he do?
To give his love away was surely cruel,
Says *Give her up!* and love says *Don't!* and shame
Might have been beaten by love's argument,
But then, if he refused his wife the heifer,
So slight a present — if he should refuse it,
Juno might think perhaps it was no heifer!



Her rival thus disposed of, still the goddess
Did not at once abandon all suspicion.
Afraid of Jove, and worried over his cheating,
She turned her over to the keeping of Argus
Who had a hundred eyes; two at a time,
No more than two, would ever close in slumber,
The rest kept watch. No matter how he stood,
Which way he turned, he always looked at Io,
Always had Io in sight. He let her graze
By daylight, but at sundown locked her in,
Hobbled and haltered. She would feed on leaves
And bitter grasses, and her couch, poor creature,
Was ground, not always grassy, and the water







illa etiam supplex Argo cum bracchia vellet
tendere, non habuit, quae bracchia tenderet Argo,
conatoque queri mugitus edidit ore
pertimuitque sonos propriaque exterrita voce est.
venit et ad ripas, ubi ludere saepe solebat,
Inachidas: rictus novaque ut conspexit in unda
cornua, pertimuit seque exsternata refugit.
naides ignorant, ignorat et Inachus ipse,
quae sit; at illa patrem sequitur sequiturque sorores
et patitur tangi seque admirantibus offert.
decerptas senior porrexerat Inachus herbas:
illa manus lambit patriisque dat oscula palmis
nec retinet lacrimas et, si modo verba sequantur,
oret opem nomenque suum casusque loquatur;
littera pro verbis, quam pes in pulvere duxit,
corporis indicium mutati triste peregit.
'me miserum!' exclamat pater Inachus inque gementis
cornibus et nivea pendens cervice iuvencae
'me miserum!' ingeminat; 'tune es quaesita per omnes
nata mihi terras? tu non inventa reperta
luctus eras levior! retices nec mutua nostris

She drank was muddy, often. When she wanted
To reach toward Argus her imploring arms,
She had no arms to reach with; when she tried
To plead, she only lowed, and her own voice
Filled her with terror. When she came to the river,
Her father's, where she used to play, and saw,
Reflected in the stream, her jaws and horns,
She fled in panic. None of her sisters knew her,
And Inachus, her father, did not know her,
But following them, she let them pet and praise her.
Old Inachus pulled grass and gave it to her,
And she licked his hand and tried to give it kisses,
Could not restrain her tears. If she could talk,
She would ask for help, and tell her name and sorrow,
But as it was, all she could do was furrow
The dust with one forefoot, and make an I,
And then an O beside it, spelling her name,
Telling the story of her changed condition.
Her father knew her, cried, "Alas for me!"
Clung to her horns and snowy neck, poor heifer,
Crying, "Alas for me! I have sought you, daughter,
All over the world, and now that I have found you,
I have found a greater grief. You do not answer,

dicta refers, alto tantum suspiria ducis
pectore, quodque unum potes, ad mea verba remugis!
at tibi ego ignarus thalamos taedasque parabam,
spesque fuit generi mihi prima, secunda nepotum.
de grege nunc tibi vir, nunc de grege natus habendus.
nec finire licet tantos mihi morte dolores;
sed nocet esse deum, praeclusaque ianua leti
aeternum nostros luctus extendit in aevum.'
talia maerenti stellatus submovet Argus
ereptamque patri diversa in pascua natam
abstrahit. ipse procul montis sublime cacumen
occupat, unde sedens partes speculatur in omnes.

Nec superum rector mala tanta Phoronidos ultra
ferre potest natumque vocat, quem lucida partu
Pleias enixa est letoque det imperat Argum.
parva mora est alas pedibus virgamque potenti
somniferam sumpsisse manu tegumenque capillis.
haec ubi disposuit, patria Iove natus ab arce
desilit in terras; illic tegumenque removit
et posuit pennas, tantummodo virga retenta est:
hac agit, ut pastor, per devia rura capellas
dum venit abductas, et structis cantat avenis.

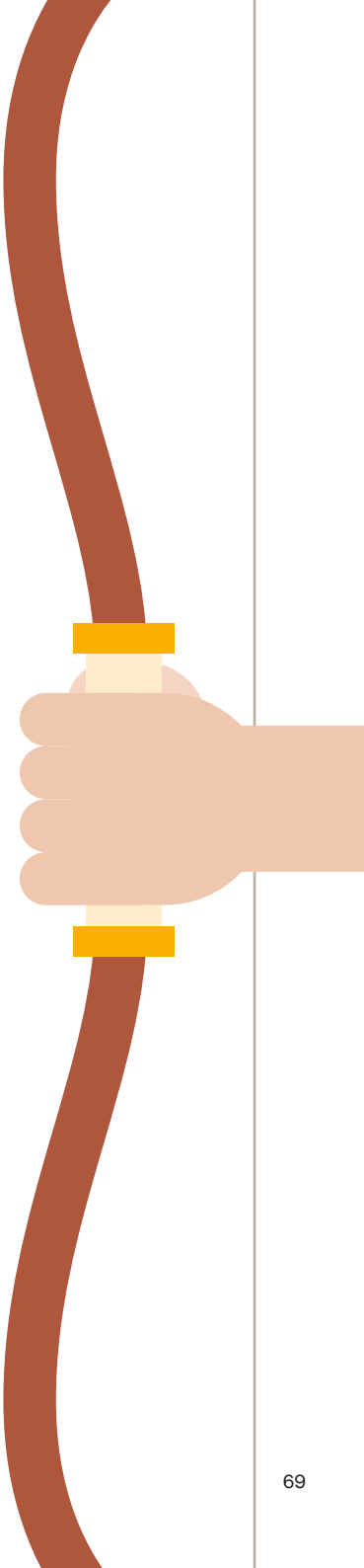
And what you think is sighing comes out mooing!
And all the while I, in my ignorance, counted
On marriage for you, wanting, first, a son,
Then, later, grandsons; now your mate must be
Selected from some herd, your son a bullock.
Not even death can end my heavy sorrow.
It hurts to be a god; the door of death,
Shut in my face, prolongs my grief forever."
And both of them were weeping, but their guardian,
Argus the star-eyed, drove her from her father
To different pasture-land, and sat there, watching,
Perched on a mountain-top above the valley.

Jove could not bear her sorrows any longer;
He called his son, born of the shining Pleiad,
Told him *Kill Argus!* And Mercury came flying
On winged sandals, wearing the magic helmet,
Bearing the sleep-producing wand, and lighted
On earth, and put aside the wings and helmet
Keeping the wand. With this he plays the shepherd
Across the pathless countryside, a driver
Of goats, collected somewhere, and he goes
Playing a little tune on a pipe of reeds,

voce nova captus custos Iunonius ‘at tu,
quisquis es, hoc poteras mecum considere saxo’
Argus ait; ‘neque enim pecori fecundior ullo
herba loco est, aptamque vides pastoribus umbram.’
Sedit Atlantiades et euntem multa loquendo
detinuit sermone diem iunctisque canendo
vincere harundinibus servantia lumina temptat.
ille tamen pugnat molles evincere somnos
et, quamvis sopor est oculorum parte receptus,
parte tamen vigilat. quaerit quoque (namque reperta
fistula nuper erat), qua sit ratione reperta.

Tum deus ‘Arcadiae gelidis sub montibus’ inquit
‘inter hamadryadas celeberrima Nonacrinas
naias una fuit: nymphae Syringa vocabant.
non semel et satyros eluserat illa sequentes
et quoscumque deos umbrosaque silva feraxque
rus habet. Ortygiam studiis ipsaque colebat
virginitate deam; ritu quoque cincta Dianae
falleret et posset credi Latonia, si non
corneus huic arcus, si non foret aureus illi;
sic quoque fallebat. redeuntem colle Lycaeo
Pan videt hanc pinuque caput praecinctus acuta

And this new sound is wonderful to Argus.
"Whoever you are, come here and sit beside me,"
He says, "This rock is in the shade; the grass
Is nowhere any better." And Mercury joins him,
Whiling the time away with conversation
And soothing little melodies, and Argus
Has a hard fight with drowsiness; his eyes,
Some of them, close, but some of them stay open.
To keep himself awake by listening,
He asks about the pipe of reeds, how was it
This new invention came about?
The god
Began the story: "On the mountain slopes
Of cool Arcadia, a woodland nymph
Once lived, with many suitors, and her name
Was Syrinx. More than once the satyrs chased her,
And so did other gods of field or woodland,
But always she escaped them, virgin always
As she aspired to be, one like Diana,
Like her in dress and calling, though her bow
Was made of horn, not gold, but even so,
She might, sometimes, be taken for the goddess.
Pan, with a wreath of pine around his temples,

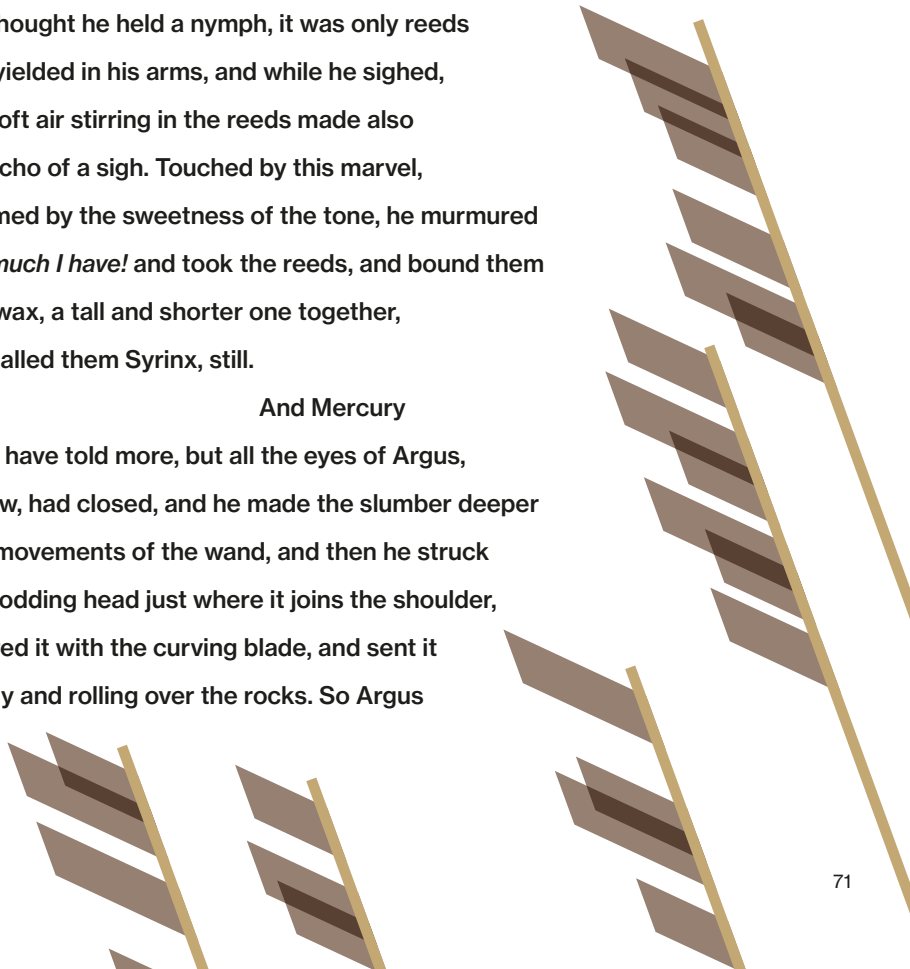


talia verba refert — restabat verba referre
et precibus spretis fugisse per avia nympham,
donec harenosi placidum Ladonis ad amnem
venerit; hic illam cursum inpedientibus undis
ut se mutarent liquidas orasse sorores,
Panaque cum prensam sibi iam Syringa putaret,
corpore pro nymphae calamos tenuisse palustres,
dumque ibi suspirat, motos in harundine ventos
effecisse sonum tenuem similemque querenti.
arte nova vocisque deum dulcedine captum
'hoc mihi colloquium tecum' dixisse 'manebit,'
atque ita disparibus calamis conpagine cerae
inter se iunctis nomen tenuisse puellae.

talia dicturus vidit Cyllenius omnes
subcubuisse oculos adopertaque lumina somno;
supprimit extemplo vocem firmatque soporem
languida permulcens medicata lumina virga.
nec mora, falcato nutantem vulnerat ense,
qua collo est confine caput, saxoque cruentum
deicit et maculat praeruptam sanguine rupem.

Once saw her coming back from Mount Lycaeus,
And said —" and Mercury broke off the story
And then went on to tell what Pan had told her,
How she said *No*, and fled, through pathless places,
Until she came to Ladon's river, flowing
Peaceful along the sandy banks, whose water
Halted her flight, and she implored her sisters
To change her form, and so, when Pan had caught her
And thought he held a nymph, it was only reeds
That yielded in his arms, and while he sighed,
The soft air stirring in the reeds made also
The echo of a sigh. Touched by this marvel,
Charmed by the sweetness of the tone, he murmured
This much I have! and took the reeds, and bound them
With wax, a tall and shorter one together,
And called them Syrinx, still.

And Mercury
Might have told more, but all the eyes of Argus,
He saw, had closed, and he made the slumber deeper
With movements of the wand, and then he struck
The nodding head just where it joins the shoulder,
Severed it with the curving blade, and sent it
Bloody and rolling over the rocks. So Argus



Arge, iaces, quodque in tot lumina lumen habebas,
exstinctum est, centumque oculos nox occupat una.
Excipit hos volucrisque suae Saturnia pennis
collocat et gemmis caudam stellantibus inplet.
protinus exarsit nec tempora distulit irae
horriferamque oculis animoque obiecit Erinyn
paelicis Argolicae stimulosque in pectore caecos
condidit et profugam per totum exercuit orbem.
ultimus inmenso restabas, Nile, labori;
quem simulac tetigit, positisque in margine ripae
procubuit genibus resupinoque ardua collo,
quos potuit solos, tollens ad sidera vultus
et gemitu et lacrimis et luctisono mugitu
cum Iove visa queri finemque orare malorum.
coniugis ille suae conplexus colla lacertis,
finiat ut poenas tandem, rogat 'in' que 'futurum
pone metus' inquit: 'numquam tibi causa doloris
haec erit,' et Stygias iubet hoc audire paludes.
Ut lenita dea est, vultus capit illa priores
fitque, quod ante fuit: fugiunt e corpore saetae,
cornua decrescunt, fit luminis artior orbis,
contrahitur rictus, redeunt umerique manusque,
ungulaque in quinos dilapsa absumitur ungues:

Lay low, and all the light in all those eyes
Went out forever, a hundred eyes, one darkness.
And Juno took the eyes and fastened them
On the feathers of a bird of hers, the peacock,
So that the peacock's tail is spread with jewels,
And Juno, very angry, sent a fury
To harass Io, to drive her mad with terror,
In flight all over the world. At last a river
Halted her flight, the Nile, and when she came there
She knelt beside the stream, lifted her head,
The only gesture she could make of praying,
And seemed, with groans and tears and mournful lowing,
To voice complaint to Jove, to end her sorrows,
And he was moved to pity; embracing Juno
He begged her: "End this punishment; hereafter
Io, I swear, will never cause you anguish,"
And what he swore he called the Styx to witness.
And Juno was appeased. Io became
What once she was, again; the bristles vanish,
The horns are gone, the great round eyes grow smaller,
The gaping jaws are narrower, the shoulders
Return, she has hands again, and toes and fingers,

de bove nil superest formae nisi candor in illa.
officioque pedum nymphe contenta duorum
erigitur metuitque loqui, ne more iuvencae
mugiat, et timide verba intermissa retemptat.
Nunc dea linigera colitur celeberrima turba.
huic Epaphus magni genitus de semine tandem
creditur esse Iovis perque urbes iuncta parenti
templa tenet. fuit huic animis aequalis et annis
Sole satus Phaethon, quem quondam magna loquentem
nec sibi cedentem Phoeboque parente superbum
non tulit Inachides 'matri' que ait 'omnia demens
credis et es tumidus genitoris imagine falsi.'
erubuit Phaethon iramque pudore repressit
et tulit ad Clymenen Epaphi convicia matrem
'quo' que 'magis doleas, genetrix' ait, 'ille ego liber,
ille ferox tacui! pudet haec opprobria nobis
et dici potuisse et non potuisse refelli.
at tu, si modo sum caelesti stirpe creatus,
ede notam tanti generis meque adsere caelo!'
dixit et inplicuit materno bracchia collo

The only sign of the heifer is the whiteness.
She stands erect, a nymph again, still fearful
That speech may still be mooing, but she tries
And little by little gains back the use of language.
Now people, robed in linen, pay her homage,
A very goddess, and a son is born,
Named Epaphus, the seed of Jove; his temples
Are found beside his mother's in many cities.
His boon companion was young Phaethon,
Son of the Sun-god, given to speaking proudly,
Boasting about his parentage, till one day
Epaphus said: "You are a silly fellow,
Believing every word your mother tells you,
And all swelled up about your phony father!"
Phaethon flushed, made no retort, but carried
The insult to his mother, the nymph Clymene,
And told her: "Mother, to make it all the worse,
There was nothing I could answer back. I tell you
It is shameful for a fellow with any spirit,
And I think I have plenty, to have to listen
To such insulting slanders, and have no answer.
Give me some proof that my father was the Sun-god,
Really and truly!" He put his arms about her,

perque suum Meropisque caput taedasque sororum
traderet oravit veri sibi signa parentis.
ambiguum Clymene precibus Phaethontis an ira
mota magis dicti sibi criminis utraque caelo
bracchia porrexit spectansque ad lumina solis
'per iubar hoc' inquit 'radiis insigne coruscis,
nate, tibi iuro, quod nos auditque videtque,
hoc te, quem spectas, hoc te, qui temperat orbem,
Sole satum; si ficta loquor, neget ipse videndum
se mihi, sitque oculis lux ista novissima nostris!
nec longus labor est patrios tibi nosse penates.
unde oritur, domus est terrae contermina nostrae:
si modo fert animus, gradere et scitabere ab ipso!'
emicat extemplo laetus post talia matris
dicta suae Phaethon et concipit aethera mente
Aethiopasque suos positosque sub ignibus Indos
sidereis transit patriosque adit inpiger ortus.

Pleading, imploring, in his own name, his brother's,
His married sisters', for complete assurance.
Clymene, moved, by her son's prayers, or maybe
By anger at her damaged reputation,
Stretched out both arms to Heaven, raised her eyes
To the bright sun, and cried: "By that bright splendor
Which hears and sees us both, I swear, my son,
You are his son too, the son of that great presence
Whom you behold with me, the radiant ruler
Of all the world. If I am lying to you,
May I never see his light again, this day
Be the last time I ever look upon him.
And you can find his house with no great trouble;
His rising is not far from here: go thither,
Ask him yourself!" And Phaethon, delighted,
Already imagining himself in Heaven,
Crosses beyond his own frontiers to India,
The nearest land to the starry fires of Heaven,
And comes, exulting, to his father's palace.

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Metamorphoses Book I

is a RAMPION PRESS production,
created by DOWON JUNG
and printed in 2025.

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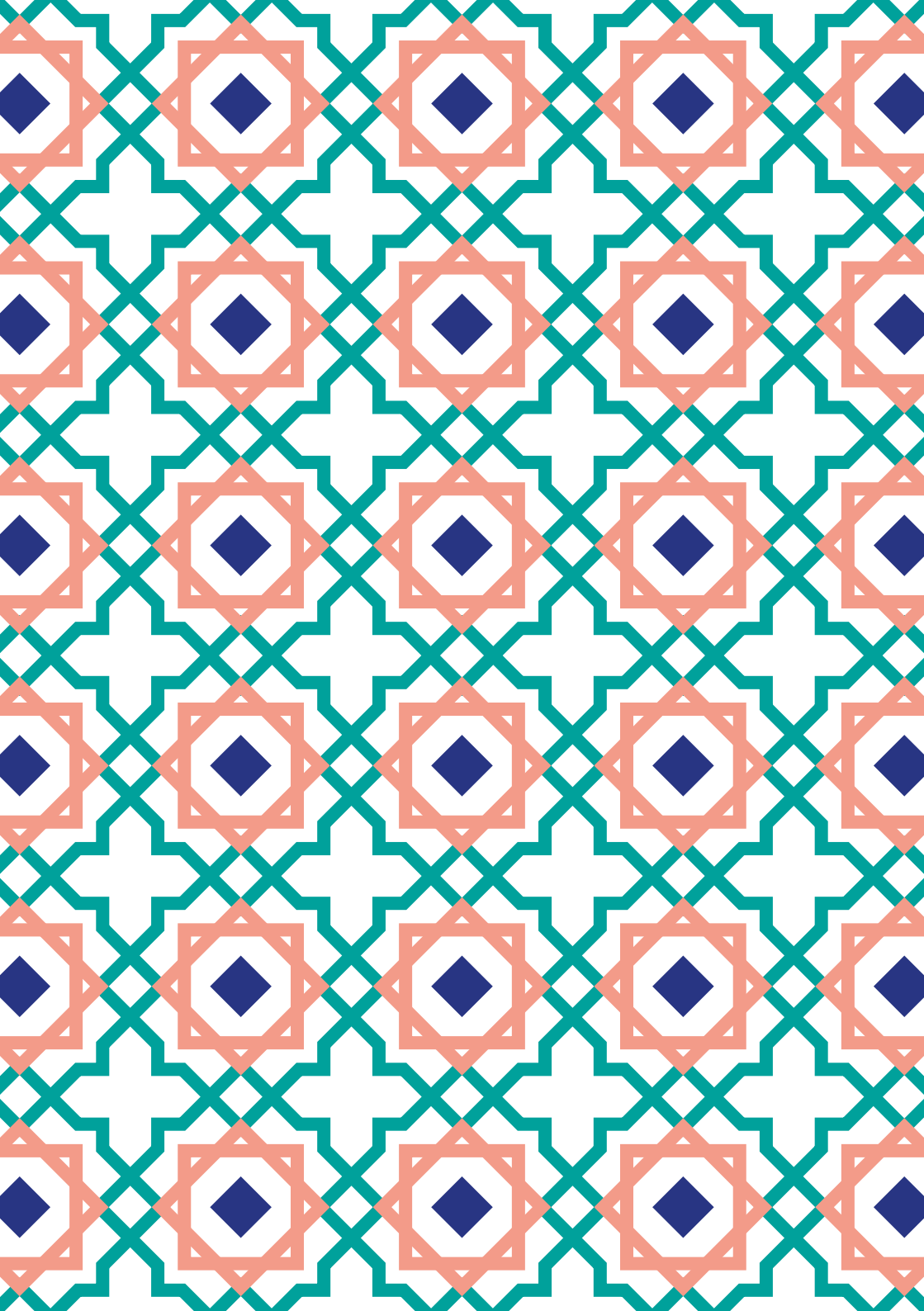

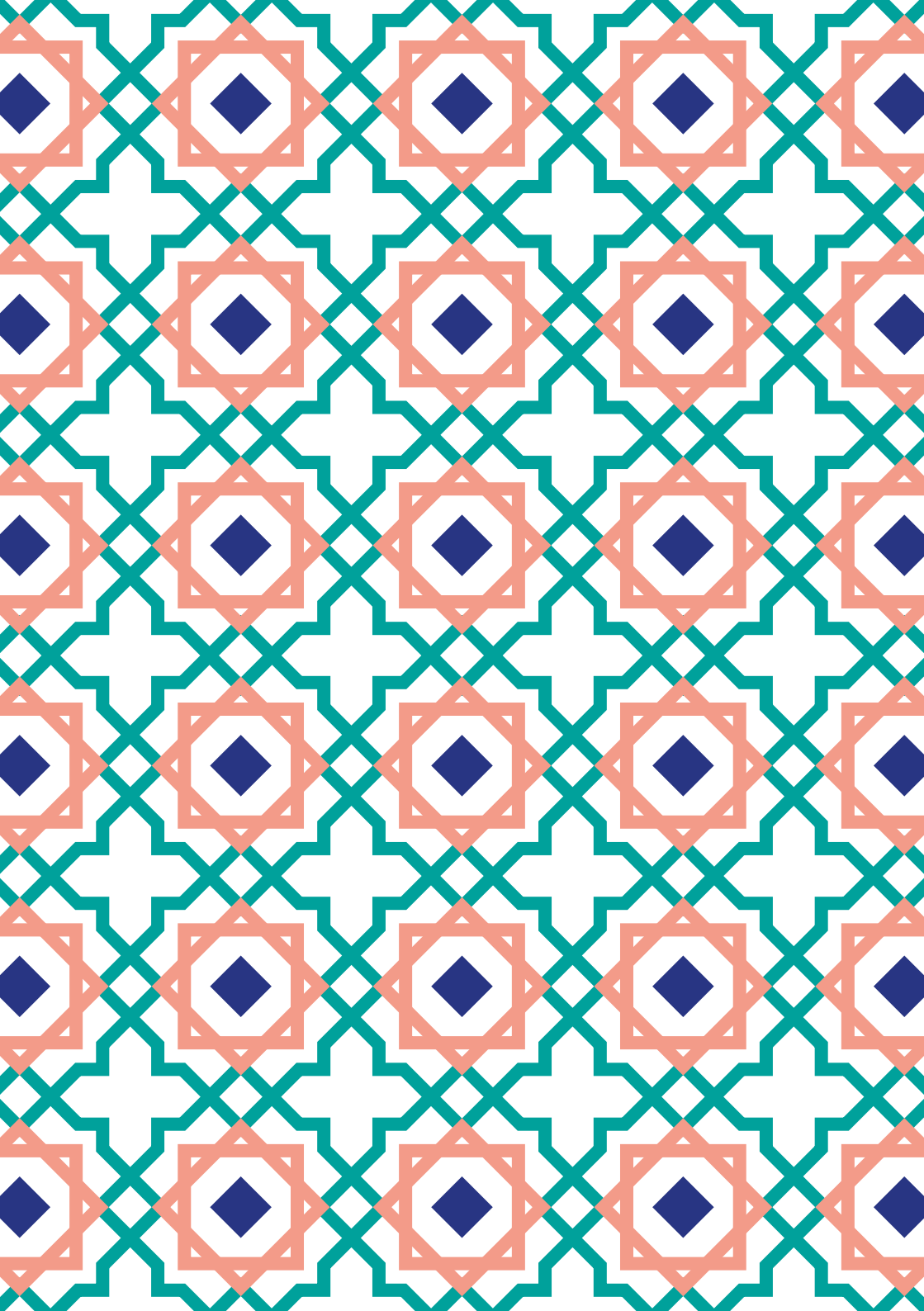

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